

Appl. No. 10/765,413
Amdt. dated January 25, 2006
Reply to Office action of October 25, 2005

Amendments to the Claims:

Please cancel claims 21-25. Please amend claims 1-4, 6, 10, 14 and 16-18. All pending claims are listed below. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of shuffling cards comprising:

placing a stack of playing cards in a card input unit;
selecting a random position, corresponding to a specific single card, from [[the]] a stack of playing cards placed in a card input unit;
determining the positional height of the specific single card within the stack of playing cards;
selecting a solenoid and corresponding ejector blade;
aligning the single specific card and the selected solenoid; and
firing said selected solenoid causing the ejector blade to eject the specific single card from the stack.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein further comprising selecting the solenoid is determined by based on its proximity to the specific single card.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein further comprising aligning the specific single card and the solenoid comprises by manipulating a position of the card input unit.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of firing said solenoid causing
the ejector blade to eject the specific single card from the stack further comprises:
firing said solenoid such that said ejector blade is substantially stopped when
nearing contact with the specific single card; and

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firing said solenoid a second time to generally push the single specific card from the stack.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising measuring a thickness of a complete deck of cards in the card input unit and calculating an average card thickness.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 5 wherein further comprising storing the average card thickness is stored in a shuffler memory device.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising initially calibrating each solenoid.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7 wherein initially calibrating each solenoid comprises:

- a. positioning the card input unit above all solenoids;
- b. incrementally lowering said card input unit activating an uppermost solenoid;
- c. determining from sensor that a top card has been partially ejected;
- d. repeating steps a-c for each solenoid; and
- e. storing location values corresponding to each solenoid.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising applying a force or mass to the cards in the card input unit so that said cards are substantially compressed.

10. (Currently Amended) A method of shuffling cards comprising:

placing a stack of playing cards in a card input unit;
detecting that a number of cards in a card input unit which does not correspond to is less than a theoretical number of cards which should be, based on ideal shuffler operation, shuffler perceived number representing the number of cards in the card input unit;
positioning the card input unit and a card stack below a selected solenoid and corresponding ejector blade;

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incrementally raising the card input unit in concert with firing the selected solenoid causing the ejector blade to attempt to at least partially eject a top card from [[a]] the card stack until [[a]] the top card is at least partially ejected;

in response to the top card being at least partially ejected partial card ejection, recording the position of the card stack; and

based on the card stack position, calculating the number of cards remaining in the card input unit.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10 further comprising initially storing in a shuffling machine memory device an average card thickness.

12. (Original) The method of claim 10 further comprising initially selecting a card thickness from a plurality of card thicknesses stored in a shuffling machine memory device.

13. (Original) The method of claim 10 further comprising measuring a thickness of a complete deck of cards in the card input unit and calculating an average card thickness.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13 wherein further comprising storing the average card thickness is stored in a shuffler memory device.

15. (Original) The method of claim 10 further comprising applying a force or mass to the cards in the card input unit so that said cards are substantially compressed.

16. (Currently Amended) A method of shuffling cards comprising:

placing a stack of playing cards in a card input unit;
randomly ejecting cards from [[said]] a card stack by continuously activating one or more ejector blades;

after each activation of the ejector blades, determining whether any cards are in an undesirable orientation in the stack;

activating one or more packer arms to properly position any cards in an undesirable

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orientation;

determining whether or not the activation of the packer arms has properly positioned the cards which were determined to be in an undesirable orientation; and

automatically adjusting the operation of the packer arms in response to the determination of whether or not the activation of the packer arms has properly positioned the cards in an undesirable orientation.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 16 wherein further comprising adjusting the adjustment of the packer arms includes by increasing or decreasing the frequency of activations and increasing or decreasing the strength of the activations.

18. (Currently Amended) A method of shuffling cards comprising:

placing a stack of playing cards in a card input unit;

randomly ejecting cards from [[said]] a card stack by continuously activating one or more ejector blades;

calculating a speed of one or more cards as they exit the card input unit;

comparing the calculated speed with a minimum threshold speed stored in a shuffling machine memory device; and

in response to the calculated speed being below the minimum threshold speed, notifying an operator that the playing cards need to be replaced.

19. (Original) The method of claim 18 further comprising recording a number of times that more than one card is ejected by a single strike of one or more of the ejector blades and in response to the recorded number exceeding a stored threshold number, notifying an operator that the playing cards need to be replaced.

20. (Original) The method of claim 18 further comprising applying a force or mass to the cards in the card input unit so that said cards are substantially compressed.

21-25 (Cancelled)